



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

COVID-19 Communications Toolkit

▷ Protections for GI Bill® Benefits during COVID-19

APRIL 2021



Purpose of Toolkit



On January 5, 2021, the Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 was signed into law. This new legislation will enhance or expand education benefits for Veterans, Service members, families and survivors and provides for the improvement and expansion of various GI Bill® programs. This not only supports Education Service's mission to deliver timely and accurate education benefits but further empowers GI Bill beneficiaries to achieve their vocational and career goals.

Additionally, the Isakson and Roe Act includes COVID-19 relief, as it gives the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) the authority to continue to pay education benefits to GI Bill students impacted by COVID-19 and allows VA to preserve entitlement to benefits when GI Bill students are unable to complete courses as a result of COVID-19.

VA is providing this COVID-19 Communications Toolkit to equip educational institutions, School Certifying Officials (SCOs), Veterans Service Organizations (VSOs), and other stakeholders with information and pre-drafted communication products to share with GI Bill students. We encourage you to copy and paste the language, download the appropriate attachments, and tweak to meet your school or organization's needs.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Charmain Bogue".

Charmain Bogue,
Executive Director, Education Service

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Isakson & Roe One Pager

The following one pager can be shared with GI Bill students, attached in emails, or posted online. There is a link to download this document at the bottom of this section.

Continued GI Bill benefits for those negatively impacted by COVID-19

On January 5, 2021, the President signed the [Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 \(P.L. 116-315\)](#) into law. This new law provides protections to education benefits for GI Bill® students who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19.

Did you know...

You may be eligible to receive your Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) at your original rate for up to a *total* of four weeks if...

Your school took any of the following actions since March 1, 2020

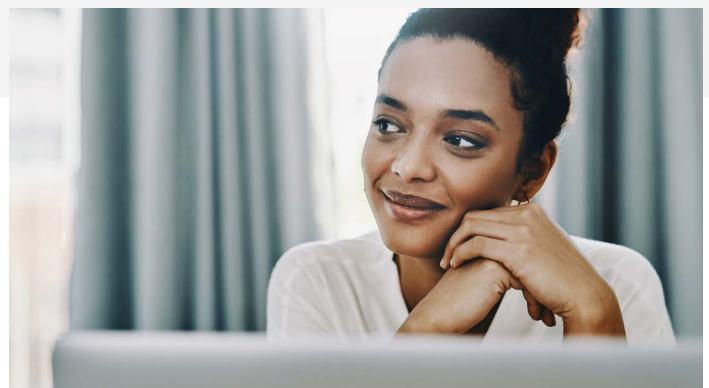
- Closed (temporarily or permanently)
- Reduced the number of credit hours you could attend
- Shortened semesters or periods
- Was delayed
- Relocated
- Converted to online training
- Disapproved or canceled a program
- Modified or made a program unavailable due to COVID-19 after March 1, 2020

For example: In April 2020, you were enrolled in university full-time, taking 12 credits, and receiving your MHA at a 100% rate of pursuit. You were taking a 3-credit lab course as required by your degree, but because of COVID-19 restrictions, your school cancelled all in-person classes. As a result, your lab was cancelled, dropping your credit hours to 9 and rate of pursuit to 75%. *Because of this new law, you are eligible to receive up to a total of 4 additional weeks of MHA at the 100% rate of pursuit (what it was before your lab was cancelled).*

VA will continue to pay your MHA at the full-time rate for any subsequent enrollments between March 1, 2020 and December 21, 2021 if...

Your school closed, fully or partially cancelled your program, or your program was disapproved because the course was modified due to COVID-19, and you were enrolled as a full-time student on or as of March 1, 2020.

For example: You were enrolled in school full-time at the beginning of 2020. In April 2020, some of your classes were canceled due to COVID-19. For the remainder of the spring and for the fall semester, you continued training but only at a 50% rate of pursuit. Because you were enrolled full-time as of March 1, 2020, you can continue to receive your MHA at the full-time rate while enrolled in any institution between March 1, 2020 and December 21, 2021.





If you are a Veteran using your GI Bill benefits (Montgomery Bill, Post-9/11, or VR&E), the expiration date of your benefits will automatically be extended 661 days if...

Your school closed (temporarily or permanently) due to COVID-19.

Please note, if you are a Veteran who was released from Active Duty on or after January 1, 2013, you are a surviving spouse using Fry Scholarship benefits, or you are a surviving child using Fry Scholarship benefits based on a death occurring on or after January 1, 2013, **there is no limitation for the use of your Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits.**

If you are a child using transferred benefits, your expiration date cannot be automatically extended 661 days but rather will be extended for the period of time you are prevented from training as a result of the closure.

For example: You were released from Active Duty on January 1, 2010 and were using your GI Bill benefits to attend university between March 1, 2020 and December 21, 2021. Due to COVID-19 your school closed temporarily from April-May 2020. Because the pursuit of your education was negatively impacted by COVID-19, your GI Bill benefits are automatically extended for an additional 661 days. Your previous expiration date was January 1, 2025 (15 years from your discharge date); it will now be October 24, 2026.

On-the-Job (OJT) Training and Apprenticeship VA will pay your MHA based on the maximum hours offered by your program if...

Your OJT or apprenticeship program has reduced the number of hours you are able to work due to COVID-19 and you are no longer able to fulfill the 120-hour requirement. Your rate of pursuit and MHA will be calculated based on the number of hours you are offered to work. Additionally, you can now roll over any hours worked in excess of 120 from one month to the next.

For example: Your employer could only offer you 60 hours of work due to COVID-19, and you are only able to work 50 of those hours. Because of this new law, you will still be paid your MHA the same way as if you worked 100 of 120 hours offered (applying the same ratio of hours worked to total hours offered).

If any of these situations apply to you, you may receive a letter from VA with additional information if you have not already. If you have not been contacted by VA and you believe that you may have been affected, please contact your School Certifying Official (SCO) or call the Education Call Center at 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551). For students outside the U.S., call 001-918-781-5678.

For more information: Learn more about the **Isakson and Roe Act** or visit our general **COVID-19 student FAQs** on our website.

Email Language

This language can be used to send information to your Post-9/11 GI Bill students through email, newsletter, or other outreach platforms, such as your school's website. Tailor this content to best fit your audience.

Headline

GI Bill students: Get details on expanded COVID-19 educational support

Attachment

We recommend attaching the [COVID-19 One Pager](#) (pages 4-5) for use with this content.

Body Copy

On January 5, 2021, the President signed the [Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 \(P.L. 116-315\)](#) into law. This new law enhances or expands education benefits for GI Bill® students who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19 and further empowers GI Bill students to achieve their vocational and career goals.

If you have been negatively by impacted COVID-19 on or after March 1, 2020, you may be eligible for some of these benefits protections:

- Preservation of entitlement to benefits when GI Bill students are unable to complete courses as a result of COVID-19
- Continuation of benefits payments (e.g., Monthly Housing Allowance) to GI Bill students negatively impacted by COVID-19
- Extension of delimiting date for those impacted by COVID-19
- Adjustments to Apprenticeship or On-the-job training (OJT) requirements during COVID-19

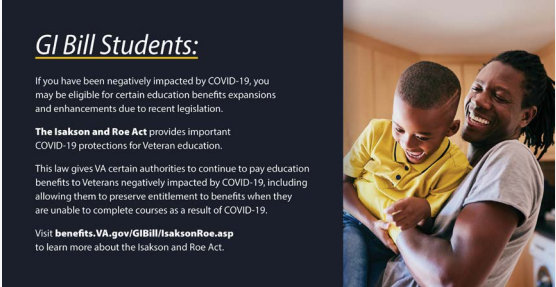
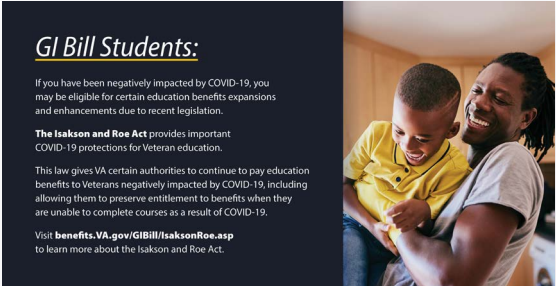
If you are eligible for any of these benefit protections due to COVID-19, VA will send you a letter with additional information about your benefits payments. If you have not received a letter and believe that you have been affected, please contact your School Certifying Official (SCO) or call the Education Call Center at 1-888-GI-BILL-1 (1-888-442-4551). For students outside the U.S., call 001-918-781-5678.

Take a look at VA's [COVID-19 One Pager](#) for key information and scenario-based examples that may apply to you. If you have more questions about COVID-19 impacts on your education benefits, visit VA's [COVID-19 GI Bill Student FAQs page](#).



Social Posts

Sample posts for Facebook and Twitter can be found below, along with a social graphic to attach to the post. These posts can be shared via your school's social channels to provide information to students around GI Bill benefits protections during COVID-19.

Text	Channel	Graphic
<p>Are you a GI Bill® beneficiary who has been negatively impacted by COVID-19?</p> <p>New legislation provides protections to education benefits for GI Bill students during COVID-19. Learn more today: COVID-19 One Pager</p>	Twitter	<p><i>Featured on page 10.</i></p>  <p>GI Bill Students:</p> <p>If you have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, you may be eligible for certain education benefits expansions and enhancements due to recent legislation.</p> <p>The Isakson and Roe Act provides important COVID-19 protections for Veteran education.</p> <p>This law gives VA certain authorities to continue to pay education benefits to Veterans negatively impacted by COVID-19, including allowing them to preserve entitlement to benefits when they are unable to complete courses as a result of COVID-19.</p> <p>Visit benefits.va.gov/GIBill/IsaksonRoe.asp to learn more about the Isakson and Roe Act.</p>
<p>GI Bill® Beneficiaries: Has your training been...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delayed • Relocated • Canceled • Partially canceled • Converted to online • Or otherwise modified or made unavailable <p>If so, you may be eligible to receive your MHA at your original rate for up to a total of four weeks.</p> <p>Learn more here: COVID-19 One Pager</p>	Facebook	<p><i>Featured on page 10.</i></p>  <p>GI Bill Students:</p> <p>If you have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, you may be eligible for certain education benefits expansions and enhancements due to recent legislation.</p> <p>The Isakson and Roe Act provides important COVID-19 protections for Veteran education.</p> <p>This law gives VA certain authorities to continue to pay education benefits to Veterans negatively impacted by COVID-19, including allowing them to preserve entitlement to benefits when they are unable to complete courses as a result of COVID-19.</p> <p>Visit benefits.va.gov/GIBill/IsaksonRoe.asp to learn more about the Isakson and Roe Act.</p>



Newsletter Language

Below you can find sample newsletter text for you to share via your school newsletter, blog or website, along with an associated COVID-19 social graphic that can be used in tandem with the post.

Newsletter Example

On January 5, 2021, the President signed the [Johnny Isakson and David P. Roe, M.D. Veterans Health Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2020 \(P.L. 116-315\)](#) into law. This law enhances or expands education benefits for GI Bill® students who have been negatively impacted by COVID-19. From protecting education benefits for students who withdrew due to COVID-19, to continuation of Monthly Housing Allowance (MHA) payments, this law supports GI Bill students working to achieve their vocational and career goals during COVID-19. Learn more with this [COVID-19 One Pager](#) and review [student FAQs](#).

Insert: Isakson & Roe Social Media Graphic (*below*)

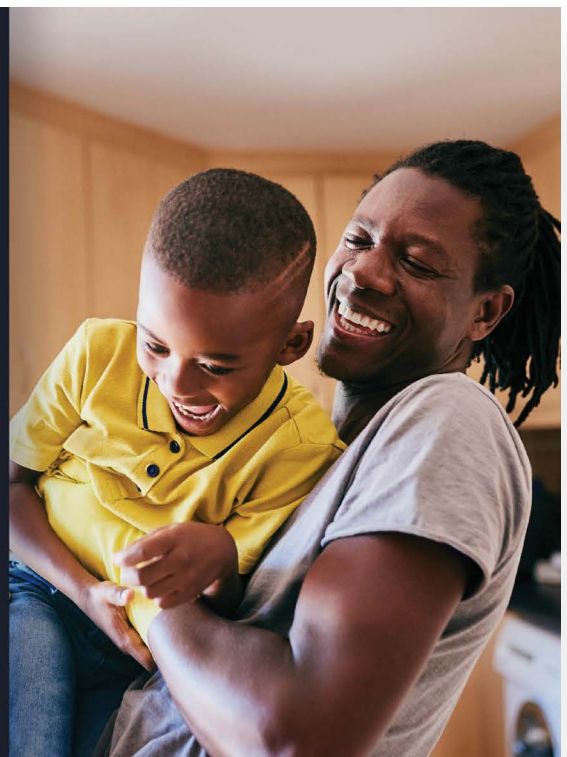
GI Bill Students:

If you have been negatively impacted by COVID-19, you may be eligible for certain education benefits expansions and enhancements due to recent legislation.

The Isakson and Roe Act provides important COVID-19 protections for Veteran education.

This law gives VA certain authorities to continue to pay education benefits to Veterans negatively impacted by COVID-19, including allowing them to preserve entitlement to benefits when they are unable to complete courses as a result of COVID-19.

Visit **[benefits.VA.gov/GIBill/IsaksonRoe.asp](https://benefits.va.gov/GIBill/IsaksonRoe.asp)** to learn more about the Isakson and Roe Act.





Additional Resources

As you share the messaging with your GI Bill students, a few resources to keep in mind are listed below for you.

Resource	Link
COVID-19 Fact Sheet	benefits.VA.gov/GIBill/docs/fgib/covid-19_Factsheet.pdf
COVID-19 FAQs	benefits.VA.gov/GIBill/COVID19EducationBenefits.asp
COVID-19 One Pager	benefits.VA.gov/GIBill/docs/IsaksonRoe/COVID-19_IsaksonRoe_OnePager.pdf
Isakson and Roe Home Page	benefits.VA.gov/GIBill/isaksonroe.asp
Isakson and Roe Fact Sheet	benefits.VA.gov/GIBill/docs/IsaksonRoe/IsaksonRoeFactSheet.pdf
VA Education and Training Web Page	benefits.VA.gov/GIBill/
VA School Resources Page	VA.gov/school-administrators/

